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TAGS: [HSTC](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [AM](#)  
SUBJECT: ARMENIA REQUESTS UZBEK HELP TO LOCATE ESCAPED  
TRAFFICKER

Classified By: CDA A. F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) The Armenian Police has renewed its request for assistance from Uzbek law enforcement in locating a convicted trafficker who escaped from an Armenian prison in early 2006. The trafficker, Anush Zakharyants, is an ethnic Armenian citizen of Uzbekistan, who is believed to be hiding in Samarkand. The GOAM reports that, despite an initial inquiry in 2006, and follow-up in early April, it has not received a substantive response from Uzbekistan. We believe the GOAM is exercising all the options available to it, and remain hopeful about the outcome of its efforts. END SUMMARY.

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BACKGROUND ON ESCAPE  
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12. (C) Zakharyants, one of the first convicted traffickers in Armenia, was sentenced to 4.5 years in prison in June 2004. She had been convicted of trafficking nine women from Uzbekistan to Armenia. She was granted a five-day medical leave of absence from prison in February 2006, in accordance with Armenian law, however, she did not return to prison. Following a failed search by the prison, the Kotayk Regional Procuracy declared Zakharyants wanted on charges of escape from imprisonment.

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CDA RAISES ISSUE WITH MFA  
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13. (C) CDA raised the issue with Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian during a March 27 meeting, stressing that the GOAM should demonstrate its commitment to fighting trafficking by staying on top of the case. We received a response from the MFA April 3 noting that the GOAM sent a letter containing Zakharyants' known addresses in Uzbekistan to the Uzbek police on July 11, 2006. They have not received a reply. Shortly after CDA's meeting with Kirakossian, the Armenian police called the Uzbek side to follow up on the July 2006 letter, and were told that the Uzbeks would "find out who was in charge of the case" and call them back. As of April 4, there was no response. The GOAM told us that Zakharyants was declared wanted throughout the CIS in May 12006. Though Armenia and Uzbekistan do not have an extradition treaty, their legal cooperation is regulated through a 1995 bilateral agreement between their respective internal affairs ministries and through a 1993 CIS-wide legal assistance convention.

14. (C) Polchief discussed the issue with staff from the

Prosecutor General's Office during an April 3 lunch. In a follow up e-mail, prosecutor Louise Manukian told us that, in the event that Zakharyants' Uzbek citizenship precludes her extradition, the GOAM will encourage the GOU to prosecute her in Uzbekistan.

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COMMENT  
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15. (C) From our perspective, the GOAM took all the necessary steps to locate Zakharyants following her escape, though they could have been a bit more diligent in following up with the Uzbeks. This investigative malaise, however, is not limited to trafficking cases; in fact, Armenian law enforcement routinely let cases lie fallow. We are pleased with the MFA's quick and substantive response following CDA's meeting with the deputy foreign minister, and are hopeful that the government's renewed efforts to engage Uzbek law enforcement will bear fruit in the search for Zakharyants.

GODFREY